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RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 3727
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 2254
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 7953
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CASABLANCA 000079

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STATE FOR NEA/MAG, INR/NESA/NAP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2017
TAGS: [MO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: CASABLANCA ON THE MORNING AFTER

REF: A) CASABLANCA 000064
B) 06 CASABLANCA 000409

Classified By: Principal Officer Douglas C. Greene for Reasons 1.4
(b), (d).

11. (C) Summary: Tuesday's events in Casablanca continue to reverberate locally, provoking comment and concern at all levels in the city. The events, as described by police sources here, are now broadly known. Police continue to search for more suspects with possible links to Tuesday's incidents and the March 11 cyber caf bombing. As a precautionary measure, security officials are enforcing strict security measures in public buildings and stationing roadblocks around the city. Reports of near riots against the police in the neighborhood of al-Fida as a reaction to a perception of an ineffectual system of security have diminished in the last 36-hours. End Summary.

Details from the Casablanca Police

12. (C) Following a tip, in the early morning hours of April 10, Moroccan security forces identified three terror suspects attending prayers at a local mosque. Police followed the suspects to a rented apartment in the al-Fida neighborhood where they closed in on the group. One suspect, according to reports, exited the building brandishing a sword as he rushed the police. Police shot and fatally wounded the suspect who was later found to be wearing nine pounds of explosives. At the same time, a second suspect moved to the roof of the building where he blew himself up after realizing escape was unlikely. Police reported that these suspects were wanted for alleged involvement in the May 2003, Casablanca bombings that killed 45 people. Another suspect escaped the building at approximately the same time, also wearing an explosive device. This suspect, identified as Ayyoub Raydi, brother of March 11 cyber caf suicide bomber Abdelfattah Raydi, detonated his belt at a police checkpoint in the early afternoon killing himself, a police officer, and wounding several witnesses, including a child. Police later identified a fourth suspect linked to the group who detonated explosives he was wearing in the middle of a busy boulevard wounding eight, two seriously.

13. (C) Police linked all four suspects to a group responsible for the March 11 bombing at an internet caf in the slums of Sidi Moumen. The police reported that the internet caf suicide bomber, Abdelfattah Raydi, may have been the leader of a ring of Islamic radicals with plans to attack Moroccan government offices and other targets in the country. Since the March 11 attack, police have rounded up more than 30-suspected members of Raydi's group, many of them beneficiaries of royal amnesty (ref A), like Raydi himself.

According to official press reports, early Thursday, police announced the arrest two more suspects who may have connections to the Raydi group. Also on Thursday, the Ministry of the Interior announced that there may be three or four more suspects at large.

¶4. (C) The GOM and local authorities were careful to describe the bombers as unconnected to any international rings but instead labeled them as homegrown and Moroccan funded. Moroccan experts on Islamic extremism, however, have publicly challenged that notion in the past 24 hours, saying that the locals involved could not develop such an extensive network or amass the weapons and explosives on their own, especially while under the close surveillance to which many have been subject for some time.

Developments on the Ground

¶5. (C) After Tuesday's bombings, police set up roadblocks and checkpoints around the city. We have heard reports that more government buildings are requiring security checks in the wake of the attacks. We also understand that public hospitals, for example, that previously had no security checks, now have strict screening measures. Western-associated hotels in Casablanca (like the Hyatt) now have extensive pre-checks, including metal detectors, at entrances. At 2 p.m., the slow line to pass through the metal detector at the Hyatt was 15 persons deep.

¶6. (C) City authorities have gone to great lengths to paint a picture of a brave and active population, cooperating with security authorities in the fight against terrorism. However, in a neighborhood that was once known for low crime, citizens of al-Fida are now afraid and blame police for not keeping the terrorists at bay. We have heard reports that local residents have been harassing the police since the incident, accusing them of not performing their job. In addition, there were reports of near riots during and after the initial standoff with the suspects, early Tuesday morning. Consulate's FSNI visited the area after the explosions and was told by those from the neighborhood that locals were ready to apprehend the suspects themselves when police held back in an attempt to take the suspects alive. The terrorists apparently had rented an apartment, in this once quiet neighborhood, approximately one to two months ago to avoid detection and frequent sweeps of areas notorious for harboring extremists in the past.

Royal Visit

¶7. (C) One day after the bombings, King Mohammed VI visited two hospitals in Casablanca treating security officers and civilians wounded in the incidents. The King thanked the wounded civilians for their courage in the face of danger, paid homage to the wounded police officers, and offered condolences to the family of the police inspector killed by the bomber in the line of duty. In addition, he made it clear that officers would be well cared for if wounded while trying to protect the kingdom from the actions of terrorists. Each wounded security officer will receive 250,000 Moroccan dirhams (USD 30,000) and a royal decoration for his efforts in stopping the terrorists. The amount to be given to the family of the deceased officer has not been disclosed but rumors have estimates in the millions of dirhams.

¶8. (C) Comment: There is considerable concern in Casablanca that a number of terror suspects associated with this cell are still at large and prepared to detonate explosive devices at any time. There is concern too, among Moroccans we speak to, that the GOM is reluctant to concede that the group may be linked to an international terrorist organization. Fear of being seen as a target for international terrorists could have an effect on Morocco's vital tourist industry, seriously affecting its economy. However, international terrorist connections cannot be ruled out and according to local experts, indeed should not. End Comment

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